(a) whether his attention has been drawn to a report published in the 'Economic Times', Bombay of 27th November, 1994 under the caption "Jaffer factor delays Konkan Railways" and about the differences with the KRC Chairman and Managing Director;

(b) if so, what are the facts and to what extent these differences have delayed the execution of the Konkan Railway Project;

(c) what is the present position about the execution of the Rs. 1700 crores project for construction of a railway line between Mangalore and Roha in the Konkan coast;

(d) what was the target date for the completion of this project and at what cost;

(e) when this project is now likely to be completed and what will be the total time and cost overruns and what are the reasons for delay in the completion of the project; and

(f) what steps the Goverament have taken or propose to take to ensure early completion of this project?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Certain reports have appeared in the Press relating to award of a contract by the Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., for providing optic fibre communication cable on the project without taking prior approval of the Government. Since this work was not envisaged initially in the Konkan Railway Project Estimate, the incurrence of liabilities on this contract has, therefore, been objected to by the Administrative Ministry. The Government has since appointed a committee of three experts for advising it on the cost-effective appropriate communication network. This issue is not likely to delay the execution of the project.

(c) An overall weighted progress of about 80% has been achieved in the construction of Railway line between Roha and Mangalore.

(d) When the Konkan Railway took over the project work in 1990, the target for completion was fixed as October, 1994 at a cost of Rs. 1043 crores.

(e) The entire Konkan Railway is scheduled to be opened for goods traffic by June 95 and for passenger traffic by December, 1995. The estimated cost of the project has since been revised to Rs. 1751 crores net and Rs. 1784 crores gross (at 1993-94 price level) which is under examination of the Government. The shifting of the target from October, 1994 to June, 1995 has been caused by the problems experienced at the sites/locations where tunnelling is in progress.

(f) The progress of the project is constantly being monitored on day-to-day basis and the Board of Konkan Railway Corporation has also been adequately strengthened.

Repairing National Highways between Tuticorin and Rameshwaram

2451. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the National Highway connecting Tuticorin and Rameswaram known as the East Coast Road is in very bad shape causing hardships to pilgrims visiting Rameswaram and the salt manufacturers who have salt pans on both sides of the road;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Salt Manufacturers Association and other public representatives have approached the authorities to repair the road; and

(c) if so, the reasons for not taking any steps to repair this Highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c) Constitutionally, the Government of India are primarily concerned with the development and maintenance of National Highways only, and for all other Roads, the respective State Governments are essentially responsible for their construction/development etc. Since the road in question in Tamil Nadu is forming a part of the State Road network, the Government of Tamil Nadu are, therefore, basically concerned for undertaking improvemental works on it.

Sethu Samundram Project

2452. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Sethu Samundram Project conceived long ago, which is important for coastal shipping has been finally dropped;

(b) whether Government also realise its great strategic importance for defence; and

(c) if so, why not effective steps have yet been taken to implement the project, despite repeated proposals made since 1955 and before?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The need for this project has been examined by this Ministry

Ever since the project was first drawn up, Shipping technologies have changed considerably. However, the project involve huge expenditure, particularly because of extensive rock dredging requirements. Hence, the project was not pursued for the time being. It is understood that the Government of Tamil Nadu have engaged M/s. Pallavan Transport Consultancy Services Limited for updating the project cost submitted in the Laxmi Narayan Committee Report, 1983, for implementation of Sethu Samundram Project.

Allocation of funds to Inland Waterways Authority

2453. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is not able to expend due to lack of funds;

(b) whether Government propose to provide adequate funds;

(c) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Review of Road Communication Facilities in various States

2454. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact the existing infrastructure of road communication in various States has been reviewed particularly in the light of the new economic policy which envisaged substantial growth in activities related to industrial/trading and commercial activities in the country;

(b) if so, outcome of the review;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have been contemplating to entrust the new roadway construction activities to private enterpreneurs;

(d) if so, tentative details of the terms under which they would be conducting such activities;

(e) alternative proposals if any, which might have also been considered by Government but rejected finally alongwith reasons of their rejection;

(f) whether any separate measures are contemplated to ensure maintenance of the existing National Highway Network; and

(g) If so, details threof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) to (d) Constitutionally, the Government of India are primarily concerned with the development and maintenance of National Highways only. For all other roads, the respective State Governments are basically concerned in the matter. In view of the Policy of economic liberalisation, the Government is contemplating private sector participation in Highway Sector on BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) basis. However, the broad modalities in the regard are yet to take final shape. It is too early to give the details of the terms for such participation at this stage.

(e) Nil.

(f) No, Sir.

(g) Does not arise.

Legal Limit of Axle Loading

2455. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU :
SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the legal limit of axle load permissible for commercial vehicles playing on National Highways;

(b) what steps are being proposed to be taken by Government in respect of the vehicles having axle loads higher than the above limit;

(c) whether there is any plan to design the pavements for realistic axle loading if it is not possible to counter the over loading of commercial vehicle; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Limit for axle load as prescribed under the Central Motor Vehicle Rules are as under :

	Tons
Single axcle (single wheel) fitted with 1 tyre	3.0
Single axle fitted with two tyres	6.0
Single axle fitted with 4 tyres	10.2
Tandem axle fitted with 6 tyres	19.0
Three axle trailer fitted with 12 tyres	24.0

(b) The State Governments (Transport Department) do not allow registration of the vehicles having axle loads higher than the prescribed limits. However, the defaulters are punished according to the provisions of Section 194 of the Motor Vehicles Act.

(c) and (d) The design of pavements is based on realistic loading. However,